ETOFFE DU PAYS



THE OVEN

a. Meaulay

10 —

ÉTOFFE DU PAYS



Photo W. Notman & Son, Montreal.

FRASER FALLS, MURRAY BAY.

ÉTOFFE DU PAYS

LOWER ST. LAWRENCE SKETCHES

By Florence Mary Simms

"Though I do my best, I shall scarce succeed—
But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And baffled get up to begin again."

BROWNING.



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À Toi, Chérie

CHAPTER I

"CHICADEE-DEE-DEE! Chica-dee!" My first note of welcome to Cap à l'Aigle came from a jaunty little chicadee perched at a ridiculous angle on a shimmering birch-tree, and then I noticed how all Nature echoed his joyousness. The daisies nodded, the dandelions threw fairy kisses, the radiant buttercups, swaying over much in the breeze, tumbled great drops of dew out of their golden chalices, spilling them recklessly on their lowlier sisters, the clover-buds.

More insistently than ever came to me the beauty of the Persian poet's thought:

> "As then the tulip for its morning sup
> Of heavenly vintage from the soil looks up,
> Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
> To Earth invert you—like an empty cup."

I did look up—and felt a great wave of thankfulness that I was out of the stifling heat of a great city and privileged to come for a season into "Nature's great workshop."

The sky, a clear translucent blue, streaked with billowy clouds, which threw exquisite

shadows on the hills, had not yet reached its intensity of colour, but presaged a day of brilliant warmth. Curls of blue smoke rose from many chimneys, and faint farmyard sounds broke the stillness as we drove in the early morning up the dew-spangled road, past white and brown cottages, with wide verandahs, green shutters, and sloping roofs.

To the delicate nerves of an Amelia Sedley or a Dora Copperfield the driving seems fraught with many perils, for these native horses swing along at a tremendous pace, evidently reasoning that a flying descent of one hill gives impetus for the ascent of the next, which seems to be nearly always just on the other side. The juvenile Jehus enjoy it all hugely and let the reins go slack. It is really very invigorating, though a trifle nerve-racking, to see the stones flying helter-skelter across the road, and the luggage bumping about in imminent danger of being deposited in the road.

We drove up with a grand flourish to a large white house with a green roof, where flags were flying, and Madame stood at the door to bid us "Bienvenu." Such a specklessly clean house; typically French Canadian, with its fresh white paint, green shuttered windows, and its gallery with groups of homely red

rocking-chairs and rustic benches—the few steps painted a vivid green with a red stripe down the centre to simulate carpet.

The geraniums and begonias in pots and tins, looking a little sickly after their long winter indoors, the nasturtiums and sweet peas just poking their noses out of the earth, show how late the summer is here and of what short duration.

Indoors the home made "*catelan*" on the floor strikes the eye agreeably, its blurred blues and pinks contrasting well with the braided mats which represent many long evenings of work during the winter. One can easily picture the scene. Tiny fingers sorting the strands, stitching them together and rolling them into balls to be braided later by the big sister or mamma, who will decide how the colours are to be blended and what the shape shall be. A long one by the buffet, an oval in front of the sofa, a round, for the entrance-hall, or by the fireplace which is the most fascinating bit of the dining-room—its stones roughly plastered together, fumed and mellowed by the smoke from many burning logs. On the mantelshelf stand the lamps with their glass reservoirs and shining chimneys, a couple of odd copper candlesticks and a quaint pair of brass "balances."

The floor is a miniature "pool" of bright

yellow paint, with here and there "islands" of braided mats. In the corner an open staircase leads to the floor above and repeats the same gorgeous colour, giving a very sunshiny effect to a room a little dark by reason of the carefully shuttered windows and the stiffly starched curtains, which, in their immaculate purity, remind one of the veils of the Children of Mary when making their First Communion.

In a very small bedroom under the eaves my boxes are deposited. The bed tucked snugly under the slant of the roof and spread with a white homespun counterpane, the fat frilled bolster and pillows hidden by a lace-edged pillow-sham on which is embroidered a dove—emblematic of the peace to be found in this quiet room. It seems a little like the cabin of a ship, especially as outside the window is the whole sweep of the St. Lawrence from Tadousac to Les Eboulements, from Cacouna to St. Denis. Ocean liners pass, cutting the blue in half with trails of creamy "wash," and the Government steamer plies back and forth, lending a necessary note of colour and activity to an otherwise placid scene. At night the wind sings in the telegraph-wires as it might whistle through the rigging of a ship, and the twinkling of island and shoal lights completes the illusion.

The air of Cap à l'Aigle is a wonderful combination of mountain and sea. A salt sweetness—a mingling of clover and honey scents with the brine of the Atlantic, which seems so near and yet, in reality, is several hundred miles away. From the East comes a faint dampness—a "tang" in the air which carries one back to Loch Lomond or the Brig o' Ayr.

Far as the eye can see, the road stretches like a brown ribbon over the hills, dipping into the valleys, now close to the sea, then losing itself in the woods, making it easy to understand that originally it was the trail of homecoming cattle, browsing idly by the way, stepping aside to avoid some great boulder or fallen tree, or to crop some tempting morsel of bush grass or sweet blossom, marking out, all unconsciously, the straggling road we love to-day. With the gradual increase in the family it was only natural that fresh farms should be started and new homes made. And so the road grew. Not violently with pick and shovel and blasts of dynamite shattering the peaceful air and scarring for ever the brown face of Nature, but gently seaming it with lines of care for the conservation of the family tie. The meek-eyed cattle winding through the woods at milking time, swaying from side to side with the weight of their dripping udders, widened the road and made

it easy for little feet to patter *nu-pieds* back to la grand'mère to be beguiled with black bread and maple syrup, or *galette* and *sucre la crème* on a *jour de naissance* or *fête* day.

The spell of the Church, which has always kept such a watchful eye on her scattered flock, has broadened the road which stretches from Chicoutimi to the Shrine of la Bonne Ste. Anne, forging strong links in the chain that binds these little villages to the Parish Church.

Over all is the pungent fragrance of wood-burning, that subtle sweetness fresh from Nature's spice-box. The flaming heart of the forest, the sap of the year's youth, the fiery summer sun, the song of birds, the frost of winter, the resinous balsam oozing from knots and boles—all compounded in Nature's laboratory and epitomised in—a puff of smoke!

"All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee!
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea."

BROWNING.

CHAPTER II

THERE was an all-pervading air of mystery this morning. Sea and sky were merged, blotting out the horizon line, and a soft blanket of fog enveloped each distant peak and nestled closely in the valley. Snake fences between the fields looked like long black threads stitching together green patches, the farmyard sounds seemed muffled and far away, yet high in the east old Sol was struggling for the mastery, which was his at ten o'clock, when in retaliation he threw out his hottest beams.

While watching the folding away of the fleecy white blankets from the bed of the valley and the gradual shaping of each tiny peak into a ridge of pure violet in the sunshine, a thin curl of blue smoke caught my eye coming from a small pent-house roof opposite, which I judged to be an old-fashioned bake-oven. True enough! Sight and smell were not deceived. Presently from the house across the road came a young English girl with sun-kissed braids of brown hair wound round her shapely head like a young Norsemaiden. Her arms

were bare to the elbow, and she was carrying a tray filled with pans of freshly risen bread. Behind her followed a French girl similarly laden, while a string of humble admirers brought up the rear, or rather scampered about around her. I joined them, eager to see the little ceremony.

First the ashes were scraped out by the old grand-père, a picturesque figure in grey home-spun and a habitant hat, standing there in the sunshine, testing the heat of the oven with his bare arm and carefully placing each tin on a flat stick with a long handle and running it into the oven, till all were placed. Then, quietly closing the little iron doors, he admonished us on no account to open them till he returned.

For those who have never seen these earth-ovens, which seem peculiarly "indigenous" to the soil of the Province of Quebec, I ought perhaps to explain that they are made of earth and sand plastered together into an oval shape, mounted on a foundation of rough stones. The centre, being hollowed out, is sometimes lined with bricks, leaving an aperture large enough to accommodate eighteen or twenty loaves. They are always protected from rain and winter storms by a slanting roof of wood or an outer wall of stone roughly plastered together, giving the effect of a miniature Stonehenge.

A very hot fire of wood is built on the floor of the oven and the doors tightly shut, the smoke escaping through the small iron ventilators. When it is all burnt away, the ashes are raked out and another fire made in the same way. After the second raking out the oven is ready for the loaves to be put in. Reversing the order of city bread-making, the crust browns during the first quarter of an hour as there is no increase of heat—no more fuel being added. It is the original idea of the "fireless cooker" which city dwellers have only lately been introduced to as *le dernier cri* of economy and satisfaction. How much we can learn from these interesting French Canadians who brought their ideas originally from old France when they came over with Jacques Cartier or Champlain, or adapted them from the Indians, who, to this day, broil fish deliciously on hot stones.

Punctually to the minute the old grandpère returned and we eagerly awaited the result of the baking. Out they came, each loaf brown and crusty and smelling delicious. The deservedly proud young bread-maker, standing with arms outstretched to receive each as it came from the oven, made a picture that would have delighted the heart of a Franchère or Suzor-Côté or Cullen. The old-fashioned oven,

and the weather-beaten, yet hale old man, with his bronzed arm extended taking out the bread all nut-brown and crusty. The girl, in her dahlia-red dress, standing in an attitude of unconscious grace, a smile of pleased satisfaction wreathing her face, two rose-flushed little French girls with jet-black hair and limpid eyes, big with curiosity, and a small boy with tattered jacket and bare legs, a fishing-rod over his shoulder, from which hung a couple of small fish, stood out prominently against a background of daisy and buttercup strewn grass, white palings, brown road, amethystine hills, and a sky veiled in filmy vapour.

Why did I think then of a scene in far-off Judea centuries ago when again "there were five loaves and two small fishes" in a setting so different? The crowded multitude seated on the grass could only be typified by the myriad blooms of mustard-seed and clover, but above us shone the same sun! Oh! mystery of mysteries! and the same Lord is still ready to feed us—not with the husks of pleasure and the off-scouring of gutters which our pitiful souls so often crave, but with the Divine Fire, the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation.

Many children go strolling past, happy and care free, and brown as nuts, never passing a

visitor without a bow and a doffing of cap or hat and a shy "*B'jour.*"

The wild strawberries are just coming in, and little offerings are brought for sale wrapped in cool leaves or birch bark cones, the sun-stained little gatherers going away happy with a few *sous* pressed into their moist little hands. What self-denial it must mean to these poor children to pick for trade these rosy little berries that are so sweet, lying so close to the breast of Mother Earth, when their inclination must surely be to fill their own, often too scantily filled, little "tummies"!

Buckboards are still the prevailing mode of conveyance, springless and well adapted to these rocky and sandy roads. There are a few old-fashioned *calêches*, but they are getting very rare, not being a convenient vehicle for the family, which, in these parts, numbers generally a round dozen.

While sitting in the woods yesterday two dear little English children ran past me, hand in hand, on their way to the beach, the elder, with fat bobbing curls taking quite a motherly care of her little sister, who could not have been more than four years old. Very soon they trudged up the winding path again and I said:

"You did not stay very long!"

"Oh! no!" the elder replied, "we couldn't.

You see it's getting late ; it will soon be dinner time ! "

Looking at my watch and finding that it was not quite ten o'clock, I told her, thinking she would not hurry on so fast. But she shook her wise little head and repeated :

" We must hurry ; it will soon be dinner-time ! " and up through the cedars and bushes of elderberry and scarlet " sealing wax " they went, the little one piping all the way, " It'll soon be dinner-time ! " while the sun glinted on a heavy gold bracelet the child wore on her slender wrist. It seemed a little sad to see the wee arm shackled with gold at such an early age and it brought back to me the sight of another little arm that I saw through a ragged blue jersey one hot day last week. It was at the butcher's. The little fellow's eyes hardly came up to the top of the chopping-block, but they were full of life and eagerness and illumined the whole of his little peaked face. I had seen him there before, and we had exchanged smiles—that golden coin of the realm that is so cheap, so rarely spurious, and negotiable all over the world. That day I said to him, " You ought to get mother to mend this hole in your jersey," where I was able to put my fingers in and feel the soft flesh and the bones that were all too prominent. " Oh ! yes," he said brightly, " but ma's

awful busy. I buys the meat; ma thinks I'm awful thin, but I ain't, you know. It's just because I ain't fat."

Such a pathetic reasoning and justification of his mother. I was getting the man to cut me off a thick slice of round steak, and the little fellow's eyes twinkled and he said:

"That's the kind I likes. There ain't no bone, and pa says if ye cuts it like porter-house it tastes better. I gets ten cents a week from pa fer buying the meat. Last night I had ice cream" . . . he volunteered, then looked shyly away as though perhaps he had been too confidential, and hurried out with his "round steak that tastes like porter-house when ye cuts it that way."

How many pounds of meat and how many cool shirts and new jerseys could be bought with the gold of that child's bracelet? Surely daisy chains and buttercup wreaths are more fitting ornaments for such sweet-eyed innocence than the gold that perisheth.

CHAPTER III

THE first roses on Dominion Day! To pick the frail wild rose on its birthday and to watch the tight red buds of yesterday unfolded in perfect beauty at a time when roses in England are getting a little "passée," the great Rose Shows are over, and the Season drawing to a close.

Here it is just beginning. And how short it is at these Canadian seaside resorts—a bare twelve weeks and the visitors have come and vanished like a dream, leaving the farmers to settle down to their long icebound winter, when they are practically cut off from the South Shore and the railway by fifteen miles of turbulent water. A frozen, hummocky mass except where the Government ice-breaker crushes a way through.

There are, however, the beautiful months of September and October, after the harvest is gathered in, and great festivities go on in the village. The farmers return to their houses which have been rented to visitors while *they* have been crowded together in a "lean-to" or

outhouse. Now they have the run of the parlour, the piano jingles merrily to the latest popular music, and dancing and merrymaking, boiling taffy and pulling "latière," continue till the cold days come and it is necessary to close up part of the big house and concentrate in the kitchen and *salle à manger*. This is the time of rolling the tobacco, weaving the *catelan*, or rag carpets, braiding and "hooking" the mats, drawing the threads of the ivory coloured linen, and replenishing the stock of crochet mats that discreetly veil the water-jugs and trays in summer-time.

There is a little straw mat on the dining-table to-day, to stand hot platters on, that owes its origin, I am sure, to these winter evenings, when the wide-brimmed straw hat of Pierre or Lucienne, wet with the rains and tanned by the sun to a mellow gold, is carefully unstitched, steamed, and bound with brown ribbon and flattened into a still useful non-conductor of heat!

> "Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."

They are a light-hearted people, these sturdy French Canadians. As they go about their work, the girls sing snatches of old French songs—"À la claire fontaine," "En roulant ma

Boule, roulant," and " Alhouette," and the men whistle blithely to the buzz of wood saw and the ring of hammer on anvil.

There is a forge near here which I never can pass without looking in. This morning a big roan, sixteen hands if she was an inch, stood to be shod. A nervous creature, who champed uneasily at the bit and fidgeted till the rope halter nearly snapped. The forge itself is a sort of barn and workshop combined—a confusion of vices and bradawls and bits; ugly-looking knives with buckthorn handles; bunches of nails and scrap iron; pincers of varying size and the great ringing anvil. A grindstone stands in one corner, and a carpenter's bench littered with a heterogeneous collection of shavings and waggon spokes. Stores of rusty iron rods are stacked away between the rafters, from which hang harness and reins, blinkers and hames. In the other corner is the fire, built on a square of roughly plastered stones about three feet high by four square, with a curious brick chimney, or hood, the down draught of which is regulated by a primitive bellows, worked by hand with a long wooden lever. This fans the flame and makes the tremendously hot fire which is built on top, close to the chimney support.

The roan had come to be shod. One shoe

was gone, another loose so it had to be knocked off and used as a pattern for the new one.

The blacksmith caught the cold iron with his pincers and held it for a few minutes in the red-hot flame till it came out molten red, placed it on the anvil, and with a few ringing blows which made the sparks fly, beat it into shape, lighting up the dim interior and his own seamed and rugged face. While still hot he threw the horseshoe into a tub of clear spring water, where it sizzled and spat and fell to the bottom.

It was no joke holding the big mare's hoof steady on the three-legged stand made for the purpose while the old horn was pared off and the new shoe fitted and nailed on. The owner of the horse, a big, muscular Frenchman in a blue shirt, short trousers tucked into his "*bottes sauvage*," and a quid of tobacco in his mouth, squirted the juice in every direction while the sweat poured off his face, and vociferously shouted to the nervous animal, "Woa donc! Arrière, Arrête!" much to the amusement of an impudent little rascal, with a torn straw hat and dirty face, who straddled a big brown horse, patiently awaiting his turn to be shod.

Two white chickens strutted inquisitively about, pecking at the "droppings" on the floor, shook their feathers delicately and walked out again into the sunshine.

Maurice and Pierre ran by with little Charlotte down by the edge of the stream which forms here a miniature Montmorenci. A Minnehaha! a laughing water, dashing and tumbling, leaping and gurgling over rocks and ledges worn smooth by her feet till she loses herself in a tangle of undergrowth, fallen trees, and bracken. Fairy ferns, delicate tendrils of purple vetch, blue harebells, daisies, and buttercups follow her progress all the way till shut out from the sun by giant spruce and cedar.

Here, in order to complete Nature's great economic scheme and to supply "life" to the scene, are myriads of perfect entomological specimens—mosquitoes and ants, flies of infinite degrees of minuteness and tenacity of purpose, beetles of prismatic colouring, rivalling the far-famed scarabei of Egypt, gossamer-winged midges and creeping things innumerable—most of which we poor mortals in our ignorance would willingly dispense with!

To-day the mosquitoes seem more than ever tormenting, and Francesca has been writhing about trying to protect her slim silk-stockinged ankles. Finally she gave in, and said in her whimsical way:

"Here comes one with a lean and hungry look! I am going to give him the time of his life—a regular Delmonico banquet!" and she

bared her beautiful white arm, upon which the mosquito fastened with avidity.

"See! how greedy he is: gobbling so fast, rushing through the soup, fish, game, and entrée to get to the savoury and the sweets! See, he has tossed off a drop of claret and it has gone to his head!" as the gorged creature flew unsteadily away, leaving a rose-red stain on the fair white skin.

Francesca is a queer girl—she is the one who steps out into the muddy road to avoid disturbing a couple of ragged little sparrows having a bath in a puddle on the pavement. She picks up stray scraps of bread and throws them into empty front gardens that the birds may enjoy them in peace. Another day I saw her go out into the middle of one of the most congested of our city streets and pick up an empty gin bottle which she was afraid would get broken and cut some dog or horse, or puncture a tire.

Francesca has a horror of cats, but would never be unkind to them. When she was quite a little girl her sister's cat, called Minnie, died a violent death. Francesca's heart was sad, for she thought she had perhaps not been as kind to the animal as she might have been, so she resolved to do justice to her in an obituary ode. The heroic strain petered out sadly after

the first four lines which ran—or rather limped thus:

"Minerva! sole sovereign of the feline state!
'Tis darkest midnight when you meet your fate.
The stars look down in pity, but not one
Can rescue you from bold fox terrier's son!"

CHAPTER IV

THOSE of you who have been kind enough to read so far will be wondering (a little impatiently perhaps) when the "story" is going to begin and the "plot" develop. Dear friends! —I must call you so, since you have been so tolerant—like the old, old story of the little girl watching her friend rapidly devouring an apple: "Please, Mary Ann, can I have the core?" To which the reply was made as the last morsel disappeared—"Cynthia May! there ain't going to be no core."

So with this little sketch—"there ain't going to be no core"—no "story"—no "plot" that will commend itself to your interest. Therefore those who are expecting a cleverly worked out plot and thrilling *dénouement* had best drop this scrap of *Étoffe du Pays* and seek the embroidered tapestries of a Stevenson or a Hewlett. I would so gladly give you what you crave, but while the glamour of romance hangs heavily in these bosky woods and rocky glens, and there are many little courtships, side glances and coquettish ways to be noted, they are so

elusive that my clumsy pen would destroy their charm and bungle when most desirous to please.

A gentle rain is falling this morning, so lightly that you can see each drop as it sinks into the sand, just sprinkled down as from the rose of a watering-pot, which reminds me of a story told me by a friend about his brother Frank, who evidently has a keen sense of humour. "Frank" lives in a boarding-house where the houses have flat faces and any one standing on the doorstep can easily be seen from the windows above. An old Scotchman —McTaggart by name—lived there also and indulged occasionally in a "drop of the craytur" hot and strong. One brilliant moonlight night he came home late with a friend. They stood a long time on the doorstep, hat in hand, making many farewells, till Frank could stand it no longer. Going over to the water-jug he dipped his hair-brush in and shook it several times out of the window. Presently McTaggart looked up and said :

"Sandy, there's a bit of a shower, I'd best lend you ma umbrella!" and the braw Scotchman walked up the street in the moonlight under its friendly protection!

The same man took a "rise" out of a bold fellow who was annoying his mother's maid

with his blandishments. One night when Catherine was out, Frank put on his nightshirt over his coat and sat in the kitchen window, his huge bulk discreetly hidden by the curtain —just one white-sleeved arm visible. About ten o'clock a face appeared at the window opposite, and a tentative "Ahem!" broke the stillness. The curtain trembled and a shy "Ahem!" came from the fairy form in white. This went on for half an hour, till the creature opposite leaned far out of the window to get a glimpse of the adored one, who just then threw up the sash, and waving his great arms, ejaculated: "Gee! it's a hot night!" Tableau.

It was a hot night last night, too, and as I lay in bed listening to the "lap" of the incoming tide and the whirr of the night's wings, I was conscious of a faint droning sound coming from the kitchen below. It sounded like counting dozens and dozens in monotonous French. I was sure I heard "trente, trente un, trente deux, trente trois," repeated a hundred times, and I concluded that the family was sorting innumerable threads for the *catelan* or braid mats, but when I heard several voices in unison I knew that they were at prayer. The deep bass voice of monsieur and the boys mingling with the dull monotone of madame and the childish trebles of Charlotte and Lucienne

in one grand "*Ave Maria, ora pro nobis.*" No Mass in ancient monastery or vaulted cathedral was ever more solemn, or prayer more fervent than that which went up this summer evening, on the wings of an all-trusting love, from this humble kitchen, to the Throne of God, and to the Heart of our Lady of Sorrows.

There is a little Scotch laddie here who much amuses his mother at bedtime. He objected to the bare floor in his pretty little room, so she got some blue and white *catelan* and just for a joke put a tiny woodchuck skin beside his bed. Every night Douglas refuses to say his prayers till the wee pelt is arranged in the exact spot to accommodate his bare toes.

CHAPTER V

THIS lovely mountain country is cut into ravines and deep crevasses. Crystal-clear streams gush out from the cuts till they lose themselves in the sea. This necessitates frequent bridges at the roadside, mere logs loosely thrown together, over which the springless carriages and hay-carts bump gaily. A rustic hand-rail of trellised branches protects the unwary pedestrian from pitching in headlong on a dark night. The road is mended in hollows and weak places in a very primitive way by throwing down great clods of earth with the grass still adhering, and scattering a few beach stones on top, leaving many and dangerous interstices at the bridges. Which reminds me of a rather strange coincidence that happened years ago on Westminster Bridge. A celebrated surgeon was crossing that uniformly congested thoroughfare one very cold day. Taking off his gloves to chafe his half-frozen fingers, his signet-ring slipped off. It was impossible to stop the traffic and search in that hurrying crowd, hundreds of automobiles, car-

riages, carts, vans, and drays surging around him, so he passed on to his operation at St. Thomas' Hospital. The following day he again crossed the bridge, thinking regretfully of his ring, when, looking down, he saw it glittering at his feet. Safe and untrodden in the midst of the thousands of hoofs and wheels that must have passed around, but not over it.

The drive to Murray Bay is one of exceeding beauty. Skirting the majestic St. Lawrence all the way—now through the woods and down the long valley slopes, up hill and down dale with scarcely a level mile. Past the old Mount Murray Manor, which dates from 1761 and was the scene of the early pioneer struggles of the famous Malcolm Fraser, of the 78th Highlanders, to whom General Murray granted 2,000 acres adjoining the 3,000 given as freehold to Colonel John Nairne, in recognition of their gallant services in the defence of Quebec against the French under Levis. In this defence unhappily the British were defeated, owing to their ranks being filled with sick and starving men. But reinforcements came and the French were driven back to Montreal, which was finally handed over to General Amherst in 1760. This ancient Manor House is well built and of quite extensive proportions, with thick stone walls and a mansard roof.



Photo W. Notman & Son, Montreal.

POINT-AU-PIC FROM CAP À L'AIGLE.

On the other side of the Murray River, which empties here, is the Murray Bay Manor—also of stone but covered with wood; a long, low, whitewashed building set in a garden full of old-fashioned flowers, monk's-hood, sweet-william, dahlia, and columbine, and evidently built substantially to withstand the rigours of a Canadian winter, imposing in its simplicity and typical of the solidity and depth of purpose of the man who, having left home and country to fight for his King, was rewarded by the gift of this land, rich in the beauty of hill and valley, rivers full of trout and salmon, and forests of spruce and cedar.

While crossing the bridge built by the late Hon. H. Mercier, one gets a beautiful view up the Murray River, fringed luxuriantly with trees, till lost in the bend of the upper reaches. Quantities of lumber are stacked on the beach, where at high tide schooners are hauled up and laden for Quebec or more distant ports.

The village of Malbaie transports one at once to some quaint seaside port in old France, with crooked streets and sharp corners, overhanging verandahs and sloping roofs. The houses are painted or "washed" in pale shades of lemon or green, pink, blue, or mauve; square "boxes" with brilliant doors and overhanging eaves, from which a spout shoots the rain into the soft-water barrel at the corner of the gallery.

A few chickens and hens straggle across the street and take dust baths in the sun. The ubiquitous yellow dog sleeps lazily on the steps, waking occasionally to snap at a too persistent fly. Most of the names over the shop doors are French, but sometimes one is pulled up sharply by such familiar Scotch patronymics as "MacNichol" and "MacLean," slender links with the past and the Fraser Highlanders, a century and a half ago.

Murray Bay is a very busy place in the season. Hundreds of rich Americans and Canadians come here to rest and recuperate after the excessive demands of the winter's society whirl. The Manoir Richelieu offers them the attraction of city luxuries combined with strong air, a magnificent view, and perfect freedom of thought and action. Warm swimming-pools lure the swimmer who is daunted by the frigidity of the water in the Bay. Huge verandahs overlook the sea and the well-kept lawns and flower-beds. Roomy arm-chairs and rockers invite one to rest awhile over a cup of tea or a game of bridge, while indoors, at five o'clock, bright fires blaze in the huge Colonial fireplaces, and the orchestra plays soft and dreamy music. Golf played over links of entrancing beauty, commanding a sweep of the St. Lawrence from Les Eboulements to Cacouna appeals to the

strenuous, while strolls through woodland paths to the village to buy *catelan* or homespun, bull's-eyes or sugar-sticks fill up the day for the less energetic.

The great event of the day is the arrival of the up-coming and down-going boats of the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Company. Then the wharf is crowded with gaily dressed girls, sunburnt and jolly young men in "flannels" and "ducks" and wonderful "blazers," chattering French girls and bare-legged boys, with a confused background of *calêches* and buckboards, buggies, and the hotel 'bus. All is bustle and noise when the "Saguenay" or "Murray Bay" is pulled in to her moorings. Hawsers straining, squeaking, and dripping while the gangway is run into place and there is a rush on board of the eager throng to greet friends, or to get parcels, or to strum on the long-suffering piano and set feet dancing to gay gavotte or romping two-step. Prize-packets and chocolates fill the pockets and hands of the raiders, who are soon hustled off by the stentorious voice of the captain from the bridge shouting, "All aboard!" "All aboard!" "All ashore!" The last barrel is rolled down, a heavy case marked "Glass" is carried carefully off, a saddle horse is handed over to his expectant mistress, who is waiting for her favourite with some lumps of sugar in

her hand, the gang plank is hauled in, and the hawsers squeak and strain and fall with a thundering splash into the water, scattering spray on every one in the vicinity. Handkerchiefs are waved, farewells shouted, and the great white vessel churns up quantities of foam and slips away up to Montreal or down to Tadousac. The laughing crowds disperse, sauntering along the shore, or whirled out of sight in buggies and buckboards.

The drive back to Cap à l'Aigle is lovelier even than when going to Murray Bay. Now the sun is behind us, dipping below the hills and throwing a pink flush over Kamouraska and making the white houses stand out conspicuously. The tide is very high, flecked with "white caps," which dance about in the maddest way, rippling up the sands and racing back again. On a bit of rising ground close to the snake fence a Frenchman sits on a three-legged stool milking a sleek black cow. The milk, flowing in a thin white stream, makes a hissing sound in the tin bucket and the man's blue shirt and battered straw hat are bright spots on the hillside.

The shadows are bronzing the hay-fields and far away I can see the field of mustard—the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

CHAPTER VI

"TO-MORROW will be Friday, so we must fish to day!" seems to be the battle-call to arms to-day. Three or four boys are out, balanced precariously on rocks with fishing rods and tin cans, and one is punting about on a crazy old raft made of two or three trunks of trees lashed together. He poles along and perhaps stirs up the lazy fish for his friends on the rocks. They are all bare-legged with trousers rolled up to their thighs, and wide-brimmed habitant straw hats, and one has a bright red jersey. They scramble over these rough jagged rocks as nimbly and lightly as any débutante skims over the waxed floor of the Ritz-Carlton ballroom. One of them has just caught a fish—a sardine judging by its lack of "play." Another has skipped by like a young gazelle, three or four squirming flounders at the bottom of his pail. The ubiquitous non-descript mongrel, black and shiny, saunters along the shore; now paddling in the water, now rushing up the rocks, leaving a dripping trail wherever he goes.

The tide is higher than I have seen it before. It splashes up in white curds and leaves pools in the cosy corners where newts and tiny water beetles dart to and fro. The seaweed that it is bringing in is not particularly pretty or interesting—leathery yellow bladders that go pop under your feet and emit a rather sticky liquid, and long trailing black "boot-laces" seem to be the only varieties. The long rubbery leaves, the green mermaid's hair, and the feathery fronds of the real Atlantic seaweed are missing.

Under the lee of a huge boulder some ladies have built a fire of driftwood and are going to have tea on the beach close to the little cataract where they will get the water to fill the kettle. The cloth is spread, heavy stones placed at each corner to anchor it on the shifting sand and a thin wisp of blue smoke curls up between the stones.

The beach is shady all afternoon—shaded by the richly wooded cliffs from the westering sun. It is in the morning when the tide is high that bathing is indulged in—rather a fearful joy with the temperature of the water only about 48° Fahr.! It would take a very courageous Leander to swim this icy Hellespont to woo any Hero, however fair and fascinating!

A flock of sandpipers skims by—a brown blur for an instant on the blue—and I dread to hear the sharp crack! crack! of a gun which will tell me that some of these graceful creatures are winged, and will fly no more. Strange that man, so self-sufficient and independent, should be obliged to come to the study of birds in their flight, for aeroplanes; floating trees on the bosom of the water, for boats; and the arching of forest trees, for Gothic architecture. With all the superior inventions of man and his imitation of Nature by mechanical means, let us hope that the phonograph will never be invented that shall imprison the note of the wood-bird or the "break" of waves on the shore, or the soft "sighing" of wind in the pine-trees and the song of the sea in the shells. Little pink-tipped shells like babies' thumb-nails peep out of the sand and clutch the fringe of the waves where they slip with a silken swish along the shore.

The tide is just turning. It has reached its limit. Each wave struggles to reach the last fringe of seaweed; falling back, baffled by a few inches it stretches out long white fingers to grasp the sand which slips away and leaves a thin line of pebbles. What is this wonderful force which gathers up the waters according to some inexorable law? We calculate

approximately what it is, but we may be as far wrong, as the Ancients were, who thought the sun moved round the earth.

With the outgoing tide the breeze has freshened, bringing up masses of pearly clouds tipped at the edge with opal tints of palest mauve, blue, rose-pink, and grape-green. Two ocean greyhounds have slipped their leash and are racing to Quebec, straining every nerve and sinew to come to cover before night falls. The group at the tea party are packing away their cups and saucers, rinsing out the tea-pot, smothering the embers of the fire, and gathering up books and rugs. The disciples of Izaak Walton have gone home. The shadows are deepening. The birds are fighting for sheltered places in the great dormitory of the woods, and I am left alone, feeling a little like Casabianca!

CHAPTER VII

IT is Sunday. A holy calm pervades the countryside. A peace that penetrates every fibre and every nerve of the body and enters into the very chamber of the soul. The stillness is only broken by the far-off song of a bird, the gentle "peep," "peep" of chickens in the grass, and the "lap" of the waves. Later the road will be gay with the faithful returning from Mass. Everything on four legs is pressed into the service to carry them to church. Black horses and brown, roans and dappled greys, flea-bitten mares and young colts drawing hooded buggies and two-seated buckboards, and *calêches* with black bodies, scarlet wheels, and enormous springs. Decent black seems to be the prevailing colour for this solemn day, but in the afternoon the charming young French girls will blossom out in delicate pinks or mauves, pale blues and clear yellows, and go driving with their *beaux*, after the dishes are washed and put away in the old-fashioned *bureaux* and *buffets*.

The little Presbyterian Church on the hill

looks like a child's Noah's Ark with its grey-blue sides, slit windows, and red roof, and one almost expects to see a wooden Mr. and Mrs. Noah in the doorway. The Ark of the Covenant! buffeted about on the waves of controversy and discord for so many centuries and set down here, after the storm, in the peace and quiet of this little village, testifying for ever to the immutability of the Scriptures and their power to-day to fill all our needs.

Some years ago I made a great mistake in the arrangement of the hymns when I was called upon at short notice to play the harmonium. They were "Rock of Ages," "Jesus Lover of my Soul," and "Art thou Weary?" As soon as the service was over, the clergyman came up to me and said, "I don't often find fault, but I must say I very much object to singing 'Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou sore distrest?' *directly* after the sermon, especially when I have tried to be as brief and as bright as possible."

A bright smile wreathed his chubby face, so I retaliated by asking if he had heard of the newly fledged and highly nervous young curate who was officiating for the first time at a funeral. He was desirous of inviting those present to view the remains after the service, so he said: "Dear friends, we will now pass round the

bier." A remark which occasioned great surprise, as the deceased was known to have been a strict teetotaler !

More than a mile down the road towards Point à Pic and Murray Bay is the little English Church, St. Peter's-on-the-Rock. Well named it is, for sturdy boulders show up through the grass, and daisies and buttercups jostle one another and overflow almost into the porch. Two huge willow-trees with outstretched arms mingle the rustle of their leaves with the twitter of birds, the faint tinkle of the stream, and the glorious strains of "Ein fest 'Burg ist unser Gott," a relic of Luther—a link with the great blood-stained past—which has outlived the flimsy versification of so many more modern hymn writers. The interior of the church is very plain, just unvarnished pine boards with slatted benches and straight book-rests. The chancel, a small Gothic alcove, faces east and is always bright with the flowers of the field. Two coloured windows add a mellow light to the sunshine which pours through the six plain windows, laden with the perfume of salt sea, wild bean, and meadow-sweet. Daisies and buttercups nod in, and the drowsy hum of insects mingles with chant and psalm. At evensong, pale electric lights take the place of the old-fashioned oil-lamps, which, to my

thinking, gave a softer light and were more in harmony with the spirit of the place and its architecture. They jar on me in the same way as the ridiculous Chinese pagoda porch that some benighted individual has perched on an obviously French-Canadian cottage, like Victorian chairs round an Elizabethan dining-table.

We walked home in the fading twilight, pink melting into mauve, into grey, into black, till the velvet curtain of night fell, embroidered with a thousand stars. The outgoing tide bore on its bosom the ferry, aglow with lights—a golden torch in the distance with a smoky trail. The twitter of birds was no longer heard, the laughter of the French girls was hushed. The petition that we had just sent up in that quiet sanctuary seemed suddenly fulfilled, and "that peace which the world cannot give" enwrapped us like a garment.

"O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before
Thou lay'st thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more."

"Peace! Peace! Orestes like I breathe this prayer!
Descend with broad-winged flight
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night!"

LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER VIII

THE calm of yesterday has given place to a fitful morning. The sky is grey and shifting, then breaking into light and giving false promise of settled weather. A high wind and a break in the clouds tempted me to my favourite seat in the woods, within sight and sound of the sea and the mountain stream. Suddenly the wind dropped and big splotches of rain stained the pine-needles, and as I hurried up the steep, uneven path, great rolls of thunder came nearer, with blinding sheets of rain.

I took shelter in the forge, and was lucky enough to find the blacksmith beating out great iron nails, six inches long and as thick as a man's thumb. The swinging blows of the hammer on the red-hot metal made the anvil ring and fierce sparks fly in every direction—a pyrotechnic display which was heightened by the darkness, the vivid flashes of lightning, and the peals of thunder reverberating among the hills and echoing from shore to shore. Two horses stood waiting to

be shod, or to have their harness repaired—their sides gleaming wet and shining in the blazing fire of shavings. Curly strippings of pine littered the floor from the spokes of the waggon wheels, which are made here, as well as the rims and bolts.

The darkness increased, the flames glowed brighter, the sparks flew faster, the horses fretted uneasily at their halters and scraped their hoofs on the rough flooring, when, suddenly, the clouds broke, a shaft of pure gold pierced the blackness, and the shower was over. Up past the dripping branches and tear-stained daisies I went, past the hen-house where all the brood were huddled, till finally I reached the road which I had left the colour of *sucre la crème* and now found transformed to a glossy chocolate.

Opposite this house is a patch of twenty square yards thickly sown with—empty tin cans! I thought they sheltered some rare or tender plant, such as tomato or artichoke, but found on investigation that each was a root of Canadian tobacco which is dried and rolled in every habitant kitchen for the delectation of *Monsieur et ses fils.* The season being so short, few flowers are cultivated here, but the patch of tobacco is always carefully tended. Monsieur's narcotic must be supplied, though

there seem to be few of life's luxuries for madame. Like the proud Mother of the Gracchi, she can but point to her ten children, and say, "These are my jewels," and rejoice in the luxury of so much love.

Little Charlotte is my favourite, her bright-eyed little brown face, her hair bleached to almost the same tint and strained back from her forehead into two tight little plaits that meet two equally diminutive ones lower down, the four tied together with a once pink ribbon. These pig-tails fly out like knitting-pins when she runs, and she is always running. Her neat black legs under her faded blue frock fly helter-skelter down the road. She has such a sweet impish face—such a look of *espièglerie* combined with innocence. She is shy too, when "les Anglaises" address her, and hangs over the gallery with her heels dangling and her head bent, every now and then opening her rosy mouth and dropping a little "spit" softly on the grass. Not coarsely or impudently, but just from childish nervousness and inability to understand Màmzelle's extraordinary French.

Seeing that the shower is over, a motherly brown hen has brought out her chickens for an airing—eighteen of the tiniest balls of fluff! Imagine being so small that you cannot see

over a clover-bush, and the early summer grass looming up like the forest primeval! There they go "peep," "peeping," after their mother. *Vox et praeterea nihil* might well be their blazon, on a field vert, powdered argent.

The butcher's cart scatters the little group, and they scuttle under the fence, among the rose-bushes. Madame comes out to choose the meat, which hangs from strong hooks inside the roof, which is waterproof, black outside, white in. Strange looking "cuts" hang there. Odd joints that it would puzzle an amateur to say from what part, or what animal they came. The butcher has his scales also—primitive "balances" that might not come quite up to the requirements of the Government Inspector of Weights and Measures but which serve the purpose very well down here. Madame picks out her joint and he severs it dexterously with a dangerous looking knife, tells her its weight (approximately) and the price (very emphatically), gives her the change, and with a bow and a flourish and a cheery "B'jour," drives off to the next house where the same process is gone through.

There are many pretty cottages at Cap à l'Aigle and some that are historically interesting, particularly one called the "Alert," whose interior is finished with panelling and doors

taken from that gallant old vessel, which was one of the boats that went on the Expedition organised by Sir George Nares and the Royal Geographical Society in 1875 to search for the North Pole. She was commanded by Admiral Markham and accompanied by the "Discovery," and together they penetrated farther north than any previous explorers. An interesting relic (which is still preserved by relatives of the late Admiral) is a thermometer which records that it was carried to Lat. 83, 20 min. 26 secs. North, where the temperature was 109° below freezing! The frame of this instrument is made of the batten of the sledge "Marco Polo" which carried these intrepid voyagers over the ice when they were obliged to abandon their boat. The "Alert" was a seventeen-gun sloop, and before leaving England she was overlaid with a seven-inch covering of teak and lined throughout with felt. She had a crew of sixty men with nine boats, and it is interesting to read, in a detailed account in a "Strand Magazine" of nearly twenty years ago, that "the Commander's pet dog, Nellie, accompanied the expedition and had her own embroidered blanket."

"Punch" had a joke when the expedition returned: "Why didn't Admiral Markham find the North Pole? Because the Discovery was not on the Alert."

Queen Victoria sent this famous boat later to assist the American Government in its search for the ill-fated Greeley Expedition, when they found that heroic explorer and the remnant of his tattered companions well-nigh exhausted and hopeless, and brought them back to civilisation. Shortly after this, the "Alert" made a trip from Halifax to Hudson's Bay and York Harbour, and it was intended that she should be sent back to England to swell the list of her naval curiosities, but she was found to be not seaworthy enough to stand the ocean voyage, so was sold to a junk dealer in Quebec, where soon after she was burnt at Beauport Flats. Before this tragic ending took place, two enterprising ladies who have resided at their beautiful home in Cap à l'Aigle for many summers, hearing of the sale of the "Alert," thought it would be a good opportunity to obtain some of the fittings, so went to Quebec to interview the purchaser.

They tell the story very quaintly.

"You know," they say, "we said to the man, 'We want to buy some of the fittings of this old boat, but we don't know in the least what they are worth—we are completely at your mercy! so you can cheat us if you like! but we hope you won't!'"

Four mahogany chests of drawers, such as

the officers have below their bunks ; the writing-table used by Greeley ; several large panelled mahogany doors with brass plates and locks stamped with the broad arrow of the Admiralty ; the officers' sideboard and a great many of the port shutters completed the purchase, and the ladies departed, well pleased with their morning's work.

Not long after, a friend of theirs was travelling on the train, and overheard a conversation between the junk dealer and a friend. He said :

"Yes! I sold them 'Alert' fixin's to two women who came along and pretended they didn't know nothin'! Bless me! two harder-headed customers I niver come across! They knew the vally of every inch of brass in the place, and every stick of wood! Innercent as babes, they'd have me think they wuz!—'twas the wisdom of sarpints, sez I!"

Ex-President Taft has a beautiful cottage at Murray Bay, also his brother, and a great many wealthy Americans, who prefer the bracing breezes of the St. Lawrence to the more languid air of the Maine coast.

Another interesting house is a diminutive bungalow—literally a "pied à terre" and no more, built like a woodman's cottage on the edge of the bush, by a sister of that delightful writer of short stories, Frank Houghton, whose pictures

of Western life are so vivid and so humorous. From living with the rough pioneers of the West and the lumber camps he has acquired much of their directness of speech and crispness of expression, and the stories he tells of his own ups and downs are rich in colour, with a touch of pathos. He says, in his quiet English voice, that makes you think he has never been in a less civilised place than a London drawing-room :

" It seems to me that I have been 'broke,' as it is called, in half the towns in the West. But I think my Vancouver experience was perhaps the funniest.

" I remember I had a room, payable weekly in advance, on—I forget the name of the street—a meal ticket with thirty cents still remaining on it, and ninety-five cents in money.

" In order to make the meal ticket last as long as possible, I was eating just one meal a day, and had been doing so for ten days. And meals, in a cheap Vancouver restaurant, one cannot conscientiously describe as luxurious.

" By the afternoon of the eleventh day (I always took my one meal in the afternoon), besides feeling hungry enough to eat my boots, I felt reckless. I decided to ' blow in ' the last of the meal ticket on one meal, and did so. It wasn't much of a meal ! When I left the restaurant, my worldly wealth consisted of exactly

ninety-five cents. It was raining that afternoon —as usual.

"I had a friend to whom I wished to telephone. On Hastings Street, near Granville, a kindly, philanthropic druggist plied his trade, and upon more than one occasion had allowed me to use his telephone, free of the customary nickel. A nickel loomed big to me at that time. With a nickel one may buy an egg, sometimes—even in Vancouver! I hastened to the kindly druggist and begged the use of his telephone.

"'Sure,' said he.

"The telephone stood upon a counter, upon which also stood divers bottles. In order to use the 'phone I laid my umbrella upon the counter, and in doing so had the misfortune to knock a bottle from it to the floor. It was a big bottle, and the neck only was cracked, so that hardly a spoonful was lost.

"'By Jove!' I exclaimed, 'I'm awfully sorry.' 'Don't worry,' said the sympathetic druggist, 'it will only cost you a dollar.'

"'Is that all?' said I, drawing out my ninety-five cents, which I counted carefully, though, God knows, I was exactly and painfully aware of the amount. Then I said, with what I hoped resembled the fine manner of a millionaire, shocked at discovering so little change in his pocket :

"'I am very sorry, but I find I have only ninety-five cents with me; I shall have to owe you five.' 'Oh! that's all right,' says Mr. Druggist, with a genial smile, 'we'll call it square.'

"I thanked him then, and asked him what it was, saying that if I could use it I might as well have it. And with all the fervour of the accomplished salesman he informed me that it was 'the finest tonic in the world to give you an appetite!'

"'Exactly what I've been looking for!' I assured him. And I departed from the shop, the bottle under my arm, reeling with laughter like a drunken man.

"That evening, before I went to bed, I had a tonic cocktail! It was not at all bad. When I got up next morning, I had another. In the drawer of my washing-stand I found a very small withered apple, and so I ate my breakfast while I dressed!

"That day the gods were kind to me. I received ten dollars from a magazine for some sketches, and hastened to a restaurant on Granville Street."

CHAPTER IX

CAN you imagine the joy of being a whole fortnight without seeing an automobile or hearing a telephone or a bell, except the welcome tinkle that summons us to the most delicious meals of strawberries and cream, golden omelettes, juicy salmon trout, doughnuts, and a heaped-up dish of *sucre la crème*. A veritable feast of Lucullus, served in the cool, raftered room at the long, spotless table from which has been removed the bright yellow mosquito netting, which, between meals, keeps off the flies. The quiet and peacefulness restore nerves jangled and out of tune by the noises of the city and the incessant and insistent demands of the telephone—that greatest combination of blessing and curse ever invented—and we experience, perhaps for the first time, "that peace that passeth all understanding."

From where I sit in the notch between a silver birch and mountain ash, the leaves flickering over my paper like butterflies, I look up to a field which seems swept by a snowstorm. Thousands of daisies of dazzling whiteness are

massed against a background of larch and cedar. On the right is the cascade racing down to the sea; beyond it, on the opposite bank, a whole field of wild mustard—sulphur-coloured in the sunshine.

Oh! for the brush of some Canadian artist to paint the glory of these fields of burnished gold, where violet hills, snow-tipped with clouds, pierce the blue, and the sapphire sea melts into the horizon; to do for this beautiful country what MacWhirter has done for the famous blue gentians of the Alps and limn for ever the transient glories of a summer day. Purple heather and golden gorse were never more entrancing in their loveliness than these meadow blooms. The woods are full of choicer blossoms than any millionaire's table can display—slender lady's slippers, swinging orchids, and fragile Indian pipe or ghost flower, crimson berries like vivid drops of sealing-wax, delicate harebells, and love-in-a-mist.

Would that we could educate the poor in great cities to find delight in the wonders of Nature—the immense kaleidoscope of shifting clouds and swaying branches that can be enjoyed in most of our large parks, instead of spending their hardly earned money at common picture shows in bad air and worse company. Which reminds me of a few remarks I overheard last winter at the theatre. Between the

acts, as usual, the fire-proof curtain was lowered to show that it was in perfect working order. Across it was painted in large letters "Asbestos." A girl behind me said to her companion:

"Say, 'Melia! what does 'Asbestos' mean, anyhow?"

"Oh! don't you know?" replied 'Melia loftily. "It means Tragedy and Comedy and all that—the Dramer, in fact!"

Last night we had an electric storm of marvellous beauty. At sunset the clouds looked angry and lurid, lying low on the horizon and flushed at the edges with an ominous light. The birds went early to bed and the cattle huddled together in the shelters. When the black curtain of night fell, it was ripped asunder with spears of lightning that pierced the sides of the mountains and zigzagged sharply across the sea. Thunder rumbled like an angry god, but no rain fell. About ten o'clock hundreds of stars popped out—peace after the battle of the elements. Up the road jogged a party of merrymakers, celebrating the glorious "fourth of July," smiting the stillness with weird "cat-calls" and songs, sleigh-bells, and the beating of tin pans. Their fun and laughter echoed down the valley and were lost in the distance, and soon this happy village was fast in the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER X

ST. SWITHIN'S DAY! and it is raining! Never were the heavens more eagerly scanned than this morning for the dreaded rain clouds that would menace us with wet weather for forty days. Some said the wind was in a good quarter, others, looking very wise, said it was in a bad. Monsieur, clad in heavy jersey and *bottes sauvages*, laughed when I said:

"Beau temps pour les canards!" and taking his stumpy pipe from between his lips muttered, "Peut-être!"

On the strength of this tentative "Perhaps" I came down to the beach and am rewarded—after a sprinkling of St. Swithin's tears—with a burst of sunshine which makes the sand sparkle with thousands of diamonds and the sea shimmer in points of light. A pale prismatic rainbow kisses either shore, its arch lost in the vapoury zenith. Pink granite throws out silver sparks and green-veined marble brings to mind the possibilities of these beautiful rocks in the hands of a skilled lapidary.

A few boys are braving the icy water and

bathing from the point. Their lithe bodies, poised for the dive, gleam white as alabaster in the sunlight. A few minutes suffice to cool their ardour. They come up spluttering and gasping and run along the beach, the red blood flushing them with pink. Back over the rocks they skip, balance for an instance on the edge, arms thrust out, palms folded, legs stiffened, then lost in the waves till a wet head comes to the surface and they run dripping along the sand.

Yesterday was a day of relentless rain. A boon perhaps to the housekeeper whose barrel of soft water is empty, but not otherwise to be considered a blessing at the seaside. In desperation I went out in the afternoon and was amused by the wild gyrations of some young girls walking, or rather trying to balance themselves on stilts. The back view was extremely funny, especially when in the muddiest part of the road—which drew them like a magnet—equilibrium failed, and precipitated the would-be stalkers into the thick of it, eliciting jeers and shrieks of laughter from the admiring family.

Torrents of rain fell; every tree was a waterspout, every ditch was full, daisies and buttercups were beaten down and water-logged. The Chicadee, whose song is generally so cheery,

piped a mournful note that sounded like "Misery!" "Misery!" "Misery!"

The little stream in the hollow by the wharf road was angry and swollen, brown and turgid from the pelting drops.

The washerwoman's children pattered along, lugging great sodden bundles home to their mother. Poor little drowned rats! the rain beating on their unprotected heads and thinly clad shoulders, their faces shining with moisture, and the mud squeezing up between their bare toes. Happy, smiling, satisfied—unconscious of better things in the great world beyond their own poor home.

> "My crown is in my heart, not on my head,
> Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones
> Nor to be seen—my crown is called Content."

The sea was breaking rough and turbulent over the rocks and dashing against the green-slimed sides of the wharf to which a schooner was tied, straining and struggling at her moorings. Sea and sky met in a grey blurred outline, and there was an ominous belt of rain-filled clouds towards the West, where, we are told by the natives, the fine weather is stored in the golden coffers of the sunset.

As I passed the shop of the shoemaker—a mere box by the roadside, the window filled

with boxes and bottles of polish—he was putting up his shutters preparatory to going home for the night. He looked at his modest sign and evidently decided that it needed re-lettering, as it was only done in pencil and the rain had nearly washed it out. So to-morrow we will again see his quaint notice

"Réparation de Shossures"

an orthographical error—we will forgive him for the sake of his excellent cobbling.

CHAPTER XI

FAR away I hear the slow "pl-u-n-ck," "plunck!" of guns over the water, which means that there will be one seal less slipping over the wet rocks of Green Island and crying its queer weird note.

The sea is like glass. A yacht with weather-stained sails is almost becalmed, its sails sagging loose and waving limply with the ghost of a breeze. The fussy little ferry has cracked the glass in several places and gone on its way to Ste. Irenée, leaving a streak like the smudge of a dirty finger upon the mirror.

A hot, lazy day has succeeded the rain of yesterday. A bright brown butterfly is floating idly by, its velvet body powdered with dust from the golden treasury of the buttercups. The air is whirring with the beat of insects' wings. The sun is drawing out all the perfume from balsam and from cedar, and the woods exhale the stored-up sweetness of the spring. What does it matter that we know not the scientific name of half the wonderful living things about us—the birds, the bees, the beetles,

the ants, the speedwell, the stonecrop, the mallow, and the pigeon berry.

"The pedigree of honey does not concern the bee,
A clover any time to him is Aristocracy!"

This morning I gathered a charming spray with grey green leaves and delicate flowers of a clear beautiful vermilion and was rather embarrassed when Ursule laughed and said it was "barbane—une herbe sauvage." I did not understand, but now I see the same leaves grown coarse and tough, rough and ugly, and I find that my fragile treasure (that drooped in water) is going to be a common "burr," in truth a "savage herb!"

How closely does human nature imitate the vegetable! How often we see frail little children, fragrant as flowers, grow up into coarse, rough men and women without a single charm to remind us that they ever were different. The human "burrs" that cling to the skirts of decency, a blot on the scheme of things and a burden to the community. Some day, perhaps, a use will be found even for them—something that comes out of an ability to "hold on." Science will invent something to prove their utility, and heaven will supply some place for those who have proved their right to "hang on" till the end.

This sounds a little like strap-hanging and reminds me of the meek little man seated in the London "Tube" during the "rush" hours, with three rampant women standing up in front of him and evidently "talking at" him. He caught mumbled sounds of "The age of chivalry is dead," "No politeness among men nowadays," etc. He was tired, but he could stand it no longer. He struggled to his feet and said blandly:

"Will the oldest of you three ladies please take my seat?"

They glared at him (and at each other) and pushed away farther up the aisle, and he resumed his seat with an air of virtuous resignation.

This recalls another episode I witnessed lately. Coming home one afternoon about six o'clock, the car filled up quickly, but I was fortunate in getting a seat, when I heard a man behind me say: "Isn't it outrageous! a smart looking girl like that, coming into the street car at the 'rush' hour with a hat-box as big as a trunk! Look at the room it takes up! Ten to one she could easily have taken a cab—those are the sort that are too darned mean!" I looked back and saw jammed in the crowd a tall dark girl I recognised as Edna Ridgeway and she certainly held a very big hat-box by its string. A mile farther down the line, I

saw her jump lightly off and call out to a small boy who was nearly smothered in the crowd; "Here, kiddy, take your box now—I have to get off here!"

She had stood several miles holding the hat-box for this scrap of humanity whose "transfer" was punched for a distant section in the East End. She is the same girl I was with in London once. If you know London at all, you will know that mean streets adjoin grand ones, and that "Mews" are just round the corner from palaces, and that swell greengrocers send home fruit and vegetables by hand. We were walking near Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park, when we saw ahead of us a girl about ten years' old, struggling along with a big bushel basket of potatoes—setting it down every few paces to ease her poor, strained shoulders. Before I realised it Edna had rushed forward and seized one of the handles, and together they carried it down the length of the Terrace and deposited it at the area steps of a great house. The child looked up, marvelling. Too dazed for thanks, too awed to do more than stare at the heavenly creature who had taken pity on her weakness. Poor Edna! she too has her weakness—the weakness of loving not wisely but too well—for which God pities her and puts into her heart, to fill the vacancy, such simple deeds as these.

A gust of wind has just come racing down the glen, bringing with it a shower of dandelion "clocks," beating them down as though the famous "White Queen" had again issued her decree "Off with their heads!" The water is all ruffled and curled, and the sails on the far-off yacht are filling and she is scudding along buoyantly. The tide is turning. A fresh saltness mingles with the woodsy earth smells, and baby clouds are hurrying along the horizon to get home to the bosom of the hills before the sunset bars are down, and day shut out.

CHAPTER XII

DO people realise how their voices "carry" in the stillness of the country, and how thin the partitions are between the rooms in these cottages?

In the room adjoining this, a young Quebec girl is chattering to her dog—a clever little fox-terrier, her inseparable companion. She is as pretty as a picture, a regular gypsy with blue-black hair and a rich brunette complexion, merry brown eyes bubbling over with laughter, and a high-pitched voice.

There was a scratching at the door and she let "Teddy" in.

"Now, Teddy! is that you, darling? Did he want to come in? bless his little heart! He shall, then. Get up on the bed, sweet one! No! no! you must not lick my face! Don't you see I'm trimming a hat? Can't trim hats, you know, little doggie, while you lick my face! How do you like the feather here, Teddy? Shall I put it a teeny-weeny bit farther over? Does that look better, dear, and shall I put this cute little bow here? My! but it's sweet!

don't you think it's cute? My angel! No! No! dear, I don't want you to *eat* the feather—what would your poor little Missis do if she had no pretty feather to wear when she walks on the Terrace with her *beau*! No, Teddy! bad boy! didn't I tell you to sit on the bed, and now you've knocked down my best beau's picture! Isn't he adorable, Teddy? I could just eat him! Did he want to do something? Well, he shall. Bring me my boots now like a perfect gentleman. That's a darling—no! *not there*, Teddy, those are my best slippers I wore when I danced with Prince Albert last week. My! but he's a cute youngster. He asked me if I liked ice-cream! Fancy! asking *me* if I liked ice-cream! 'Course I do, eh, Teddy? you wouldn't have asked me a silly question like that, would you, my angel? but he isn't half so clever as *you*. No, dear, don't lick me again! No! no! you mustn't eat *that*—that's nasty soap—makes little doggie very sick and not able to eat nicey bones. Never mind, dear! we'll go down to see the boat come in and you shall carry a nice little stone all the way. Shall I put on my little blue coat, Teddy, or my middy waist? for you know we're going to the boat, and perhaps we'll see Perley. . . ."

And off she goes down the "golden stairs" to the *salle à manger*, singing blithely and chatter-

ing like a Poll Parrot all the way, leaving me to watch a bevy of small boys and girls flying a kite on the other side of the potato patch, up by the barn; the great unwieldy paper face lying flat on the ground till raised by the biggest boy, who runs with it up the hill, trying to float it on the breeze. After several vain attempts he at last succeeds, and pays out yards and yards of string till it rises high in the sky, its ragged scraps of paper "tail" flying out gaily behind, while the children shriek with delight and turn somersaults in their ecstasy and beg to be allowed to hold the string.

We have just returned from an all-day picnic to the Fraser Falls, about seven miles inland. Up tremendous hills, which these country horses take with wonderful agility and sureness of footing, through deep woods, where the daylight filters dimly through the interlaced branches which flick against the carriage top, and where the wheels sink deep in the soft moist earth. Tamarack and pine, hoary with age—with long grey beards of lichen—rub shoulders with straight young saplings of beech and silver birch, knee-deep in bracken and pigeon berries, stunted firs, and blueberry bushes. In the meadows beyond the woods, brown and dappled cows graze contentedly, all heading in the same direction up the valley. Near by is a grey mare cropping

the grass under a tree, with a long-legged, gawky foal frisking at her side. Few sheep are to be seen, which seems strange when one contrasts these emerald hills with the brown slopes of the Sussex Downs at this time of year, where so many browse and the mutton is so famous.

After a stretch of fairly level road we come to another wood and a bridge which spans the little stream which feeds the wonderful Fraser Falls. Just here is a sawmill with the yard piled high with freshly cut lumber, and we walk through a bed of sawdust to the opening of a glorious wood, deep in pine-needles, ferns, and bracken and wonderful moss. The stream rushes clear brown into a pool the colour of maple syrup, blocked by great boulders, against which it dashes and foams and forms exquisite rapids till it reaches the great chasm where it drops sheer down in creamy masses into a deep cup, all verdure lined in moss and lichen. Frail white birches and elderberry bushes bend to drink of the cup, and rainbow drops of spray glisten on their branches. In a tremendous hurry to get to the sea, the stream rushes on through a narrow gorge, then tumbles in a final burst of creamy foam into a pool—mysteriously dark and wonderfully quiet after the tumult—from which it flows sedately between

shadowy banks till it reaches the Murray River and finally the sea.

The enchantment of these woods lies in their constantly shifting kaleidoscope of colour. A passing cloud makes them solemn, brooding, awesome. A shaft of sunlight sets the leaves dancing and shimmering and the water bubbling merrily. A thunderstorm lets loose the evil spirits that hurry through the woods, wrecking birds' nests and shrieking demoniacally, blasting giant trees with lightning bolts and making little trees tremble and shake with fear. A touch of Jack Frost's icy fingers congeals the sap and splashes blood-red stains upon the trees. Time wrinkles the leaves and paints them a mellow gold till they drop, and whirl, and twirl, and swirl in an abandoned frenzy on the fringe of autumn's skirts.

Think of the mystery of these woods under a soft blanket of snow! Each baby twig wrapped in white swaddling clothes, each branch loaded with its fluffy burden. All the leaves gone, all the berries hidden—asleep, under Nature's great white counterpane till the magic awakening in the spring!

Think of the radiancy of the moon rising over this gorge on a frosty night when the air is crystal clear and the stars bright diamond points in the blue, and the everlasting pines

stand sentinel, pointing their spears heavenwards—and doubt, if you will, "that the heavens declare the Glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

We drove home past the "Fromagerie" with its rows of bright tin cans at the door, its faint cheesey smell of sour milk and its great trough of pigswill at the corner. A couple of razor-backed porkers grunted and nosed about in the sunshine, greedily hustling away a few long-legged chickens that came to peck at the trough.

The hedges were festooned with trails of raspberry bushes, ruby drops depending from their slender stems, and every rocky thicket was carpeted with blue berries. Feathery golden rod, just ready to burst into a golden glow, rioted with red "rocket" and white immortelles. Acres of clover spiced the air and grasshoppers "click" "clicked" in the grass as though Nature were winding a watch with a phenomenally long spring. The road wound round by the Murray River and we caught a last glimpse of the beautiful Fraser Fall where she mingles her icy freshness with the salt of the sea, at the quaint little village of Malbaie.



Photo W. Notman & Son, Montreal.

FISHERMAN—CAP À L'AIGLE.

CHAPTER XIII

THERE was tragedy in the woods to-day. High up in the pine-trees, flying excitedly to and fro, crows were cawing angrily and beating the leaves till something fell with a sickening thud at my feet. It was a beautiful bird—a red-throated throstle, broken winged and bleeding—a pitiful sight. Oh! the agony in that bright eye so quickly glazing, the faintly pulsing heart, the quivering limbs! I could not bear its prolonged suffering. There was a big stone close by—I hated to do it—I shut my eyes—and ended its agony. God forgive me; but I did it in compassion, not in wantonness. The carrion crows fought more fiercely, enraged at being despoiled of their prey; the little birds hid away in the thicket and quenched their song, fearful of becoming victims of their enemies' wrath. A rusty brown squirrel with a bushy tail scuttled across the path and disappeared into a deep hole, leading, no doubt, to some elaborate subterranean passage impregnable alike to human or winged marauders.

It is cold to-day—so cold that we are glad

to gather round a glorious fire of pine-logs in the old-fashioned *chaumière.* The ashes are glowing red, and the flames dancing up the chimney throw a bright glow on the highly polished chairs and tables and the buffet which is nearly five feet high, and draped with a drawn-work cover of ivory homespun linen.

Outside all is grey and misty. "Beau temps pour le pêcher," Monsieur says, so, no doubt, to-night for supper we will be regaled with delicious salmon trout and freshly caught sardines, followed by flaky pancakes and crushed maple sugar, which it is worth while travelling many miles to get!

The *parloir* is divided by elaborate latticed and glazed doors into two rooms—the inner one sacred to the piano and the new upholstered parlour suite, while the outer is the living-room with a big homely wood stove, a square table, several rocking-chairs and a sofa of Procrustean hardness. A model of a frigate hangs from the rafters and behind the stove is a wonderful picture of la bonne Ste. Anne with a brown halo and very hectic cheeks, worked by some of Madame's ancestresses, in wool on the finest cardboard. Cheap prints and oleographs hang here and there with a photograph of the family burying-ground and that quaint morality picture "Cash and Credit." Over the buffet is a curious

crayon sketch. A man stretched on the ground with a huge tiger (looking as tame as a tabby cat) on top of him. His friend stands by with a levelled gun, evidently intent on killing the dreadful beast, but, judging by the angle at which the gun is pointed, the man runs more risk than the animal, which looks strangely like a human being with a striped woolly rug thrown over him. It is all grotesquely out of drawing and is evidently the work of some very juvenile artist.

This morning Madame let me into the mysteries of butter-making. Quite early we went into the *laiterie*—a cool dim room away from the kitchen, exquisitely clean, and lined with shelves on which stood rows and rows of white bowls filled with milk on which the cream was rising thickly. Madame filled the churn half full and tightly closed the top. It is a barrel-shaped affair with a spigot from which the buttermilk is drawn off. It is hung on a rotary pivot which is worked with the foot in a sort of stirrup, and in an incredibly short time the butter "comes"—a fragrant mass of delicious creaminess. It is taken out, squeezed in coarse linen and washed several times in icy spring water. A little salt is worked in and soon it is ready to be pressed into fat round balls, imprinted with an effigy of a running hare with a pug

nose! Everything is spotlessly clean; bright tins hang everywhere and an enormous *armoire* fills up one side of the kitchen. Madame's sewing machine stands in the window, and several habitant rocking-chairs add a touch of comfort. In spite of so many things in this small room, there seems a place for everything. There is no suggestion of crowding and disorder—on the contrary, perfect orderliness prevails and shows what an excellent manager Madame is, and how she has trained her large family to be neat as well. The polished wooden crucifix hanging in the corner points to their higher hopes and shows how large a part religion plays in their daily life.

Mr. George M. Wrong in his interesting book "A Canadian Manor and its Seigneurs" gives a detailed account of the tithes exacted by the Church from these poor people. A twenty-sixth part of the produce of their grain fields. This surely cannot be much in a district where one sees so few, and such thin harvests of barley and oats, buckwheat and timothy. Potatoes seem their only crop with acres and acres of hay. In return for the payment of this tithe, proud parents have the right to present their twenty-sixth child for complete adoption by the Church. A privilege which, I hear, has actually been taken advantage of! Race suicide

seems in no danger of becoming popular in Cap à l'Aigle, but unfortunately the many daisy-strewn graves in the churchyard testify only too accurately to the early cutting off of young lives by that insidious "white man's plague," consumption, which can easily be traced to the huddling together of many breathing creatures in small rooms, almost hermetically sealed during the long winter months.

Here and there on the road to Murray Bay and eastwards towards St. Siméon are rude "Calvarys." Often mere rough painted crosses, sometimes adorned with nails and spears and a crown of thorns. It is no uncommon sight on a summer evening to see a little group devoutly kneeling at the foot of the Cross while the distant note of the Angelus comes trembling up the valley. For what are they pleading? What is the desire of their hearts? Will they be answered in just the way their hearts crave, or in some more mysterious way which is best for their soul's health, though far from their earthly desires? Are they pleading for further blessings or sending up grateful thanks for mercies vouchsafed and perils past? It is all a great mystery. A mystery which gives savour and sweetness to life. A perfume as of spikenard—that "box of very precious ointment."

CHAPTER XIV

A SCHOOL of porpoises is playing in the bay—long pearly-white monsters diving in and out and throwing up jets of water and emitting from time to time that curious sighing sound that has won for them the sobriquet of "Sea Canary." These enormous creatures (a species of white whale) are sometimes twenty feet long, but they average about fourteen feet, and are a valuable "catch," as each yields about a hundred dollars' worth of oil. The blubber is boiled and eaten by the natives, being rich in fat, and the skin is tanned into a very durable and waterproof leather.

The principal porpoise fishery of the St. Lawrence is at Rivière Ouelle, just opposite Murray Bay, where, according to report, there was a tremendous catch of one hundred and one of these giant beasts by four men armed with spears and harpoons, one summer night in 1870. One can picture that awful slaughter, when the moon looked down and saw the fishery running red with blood, and the huge

carcases drawn up on the beach, and the great fires lighted to boil the blubber.

Now, they are lolloping about in the sunshine, consuming quantities of small fish and coming so close in shore that one can see the whole shape of their marble-like bodies swimming, not ungracefully, in the blue.

In striking contrast to these giants of the sea are two saucy little kittens frisking about below the verandah, biting each other and boxing with their tiny velvet paws, so sinuous and so graceful in every movement and in such singular contrast to the clumsy gambollings of puppies of the same tender age. These little cats are striped like coons, but their mother is the colour of a ripe apricot—with a very smug expression!

A grey goose wanders by with nine lanky goslings that have doubled in size during the past fortnight.

Cyrias and Telesphore run blithely up the hill with the empty water-butt on a little cart to fill it at the creek. Cyrias, barelegged and grinning, balanced on the shafts, urges Telesphore to run faster, and they race along at a fearful pace, the tin bucket jangling all the way. Presently they come into sight again. Panting and puffing and pushing the barrel, now full to overflowing; up the hill they go,

the water dripping and splashing into the road, while they both hang on to the shafts to "brake" on the downward grade.

Little Marie Antoinette—Heaven defend this innocent child from the fate of that tragic queen!—in her shabby scarlet frock, brings the cows home at milking time; shying a stray stone every now and then at one which lingers overlong at some tempting blossom or lush grass.

A black-hooded buckboard has just driven up, a square box covered with oilcloth strapped on the back. An old woman brown and shrivelled like a winter apple has stepped down and is anxious for us to buy her *étoffe du pays* made by her own hands, at her little cottage far away in some remote concession. The wool shorn from the sheep grazing on these mountain slopes, carded and combed, washed and woven in the long winter evenings into great bolts of homespun, a natural grey or a creamy white. Formerly their looms were very narrow and their combination of colour very limited—merely black threads and white in varying proximity and weaving, but now they make it much wider and dye the wool in beautiful shades of rose and blue, violet and green, and every possible combination of black and white and tweed mixtures. The

warp and woof are pure wool, so the lower St. Lawrence "*étoffe du pays*" bears close inspection, and vies in popularity with the famous tweeds of Scotland and Halifax.

Half-breed Indians with a strong intermixture of French blood, aquiline features, piercing eyes and straight black hair, bring panniers on their backs filled with boxes and baskets, mats and trays made of sweet grass from the wayside ditches, and bark stripped from the slender silver birch. Mocassins, gaily embroidered in beads and multi-coloured silks and porcupine quills, rivalling in brilliancy the early Tyrian and Phoenician dyes, strings of beads and wampum, toy canoes, beaded cushions, slippers and bags make up their stock in trade, with bows and arrows and miniature toboggans cunningly fashioned from the white pine. All amazingly clean when one takes into consideration the filthy, dirty conditions in which most of these Indians live.

Far away I see the waggon of the Magasin Général of Murray Bay winding up the valley, its cream-coloured umbrella looking like an animated mushroom in the distance. Beside me is a basket heaped with treasures gathered this morning while walking to the Ravine. There are daisies and buttercups, single and double pink roses, purple vetch, saffron-tinted

mustard, white, pink, and purple clover, golden mallow, white bean flower and a strange species of thistle, blue as the Virgin's robe.

Such simple sights and delights make up the programme of the day in this Sleepy Hollow and remind me that the time draws near when I must leave them all. I want to go before the flowers fall to the sickle, and the birds forget their song, and the hum of insects is hushed.

The summer cottages are full now. Merry laughter and shrill voices echo from balconies and beaches. Tennis courts are gay with flannelled men and rainbow-frocked girls, while matronly women rock to and fro in habitant rockers, their knitting-pins and embroidery-needles keeping pace with their tongues. Angel-faced children abound in this happy playground, where the dirt is all "clean dirt" and they can play to their heart's content.

Bonfires on the beach put the darkness to flight and remind us of the days when there was no telegraphic communication with the South Shore, and once a year—St. John's Day—great bonfires were lighted in front of houses where death had claimed a victim, to flash the news to friends and relatives. A very large fire denoted an adult; a small one, a child. The same fire extinguished and relighted, signified two or three deaths in the same family. So this, that is a joy

fire to us of the twentieth century, was the simple way of announcing the Harvest of the Great Reaper in the early pioneer days of Canada. Great masses of driftwood are collected, dry branches of sapin and cedar crackle and flare, throwing out fiery sparks and the pent-up sweetness of the forest. Girls and boys in many coloured sweaters toast succulent marsh-mallows, stuck on long pronged sticks, in the glowing embers, while college songs and rag-time snatches rip the air.

The moon comes out—modestly drawing her cloudy skirts aside till she is revealed in perfect beauty and her pathway a strip of silver from shore to shore. The fire burns low, the last marsh-mallow is eaten, the last song sung. The few dark figures bending over the dying fire and smothering it with sand are silhouetted against the sky and gradually fade away into the blackness of the woodland path, where ghostly silver birches point white fingers heavenwards, and where it would not be strange if slender feet slipped, and strong arms were outstretched, and heart leaped out to heart in the great mystery of love.

"God made the night, and marv'lling how
That she might be most ravishingly fair,
He orb'd the moon upon her beauteous brow
And mesh'd a myriad stars within her hair."

CHAPTER XV

THE last day has come, and I must leave this lovely place. But first I must say "good-bye" to all my favourite haunts. The forge, with its ringing anvil and bright flame, the chickens hurrying through the grass, the sofa on the rocks where the salt spray kisses my face, and the rushing stream, ceaselessly racing over the boulders and fallen tree trunks. I must sit again on the fairy carpet of green velvet moss under the silver birch and mountain ash with its down-drooping clusters of scarlet berries, and look up to the snow-white drift of daisies; and beyond the daisies to the fringe of spruce and cedar; and beyond the cedars to the cerulean blue of heaven, where "cotton-wool" clouds float idly by on the wings of the summer wind.

"The clear, dear breath of God that loveth us,
Where small birds reel and winds take their delight."

Bright patches of clover empurple the meadow, dimming the brightness of the daisies which are seeding and storing up their sweetness till the harvest, when they will be transmuted, and

their fragrance born again in creamy milk and golden butter.

Green knobs are forming on the raspberries giving earnest of a plentiful crop. Monsieur has uncovered his tobacco plants, which show a sturdy growth. The fluffy balls of feathers have developed into very independent chickens that hustle their foster-mother about to such an extent that she has been driven back to the nest, where she laid an egg this morning, with that unconquerable maternal desire, I suppose, to have something to take care of!

The dim recesses of the woods are sweeter than ever to-day. The hot, aromatic perfume of sapins and moist earth outclass the far-famed spices of Araby, and no Elgin marbles were ever lovelier than these silver birches, with their tapering stems, their milk-white bark and shimmering leaves, the stately pines, with lichen-covered branches, and the spruce trees, smeared thick with resinous gum.

The grasses are seeding rapidly—fat bulrush-headed spikes powdered with purple pollen dance with feathery sisters, and violet vetch stretches out fairy fingers to twine them round daisy heads and mallow stalks. A four-leaved clover springs up to greet me and to make my last day a happy one, and perhaps to bring luck to my little book.

The sea alone is unchanged—yet ever changing. Every shifting cloud throws shadows —now purple, now green. A puff of wind crimps the water into Marcel waves; a breeze tosses up "white caps," and a squall buffets it about in great angry rollers that dash on the shore and eat into the very heart of the rocks.

Ink-black crows fly lazily among the tree-tops, their great wings flapping in the branches and scattering down dry twigs and soft white cotton pods. Baby birds flit by, darting after insects in the underbush, but the rossignol and throstle are not so full-throated as in June, and their note is a little plaintive.

While walking through a field yesterday a bird suddenly flew up, almost in my face, and looking down I saw a small round hole among the grasses—a meadow-lark's nest with two tiny birds in it. I shuddered to think of the horrible murder I might have committed had I taken another step. I walked warily, and soon came upon another with five nestlings tucked in tightly and fast asleep. God's loving protecting care has taught these wee creatures to build in hidden places and clothed them with earth-brown plumage. The same Providence which turns the ptarmigan and hare white in winter, to save them from the snare of the fowler.

The time has come to say good-bye—"fare-

thee-well!" in the deepest sense of the words, all my feathered friends, green slopes, and shady nooks! May the ruthless hand of the vandal or progressionist never be raised against you to divert your water-courses into hydraulic monsters, to break that granite heart of yours and to murder the exquisite stillness with buzz-saw and modern machinery. *A Dieu* I confide you Who has showered blessings so lavishly upon this lovely land, trusting that He will save you with your beauty undimmed for future generations of happy children and world-weary men and women, and that my "Adieu" may be changed to "Au revoir!"

The bay is a sheet of glass—the hills purple deepening to black. The moon came up from her bath in the sea with a rosy flush which changed to gold, transmuted by the great Alchemist into pure quicksilver which trickles elusively over the bosom of the water, defying imprisonment. Lights twinkle in cottage windows, cattle are black patches in the fields, men and women dwindle into mere specks by the roadside. The shrill thin "Chicadee-dee-dee" grows faint, the laughter and voices die in the distance, the far-off perfume of wood-smoke vanishes in the cold, fresh saltness of the sea, and my little barque is out in the open, steeped in Moonshine and Memory.

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